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LOVE, THE KEY TO RELIGION.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—JOHN xiv., 15–17.

For a long period, in the church, the question of the nature and relations of Christ has been a theme of investigation and of study; and the weightiest and most unfinished controversies of the Christian era have turned upon the nature of Christ—upon whether he was divine, or whether, being divine, he was a part of the Godhead. That controversy, not yet escaped from the church, has taken on a certain outward form beyond; and it is a question now whether Christianity, as the outcome of Christ, is true—whether there was a historic Christ; whether anything which can be deduced from the so-called records of his life is worthy of the reception of a scientific mind, or comes within the jurisdiction of evidence—such evidence as it is proper that a thinking, trained man should receive. "What think ye of Christ?" is still the question. Is he divine, or is he not? Is he God manifest in the flesh, or only a moral genius, developed suddenly, by just such a combination of circumstances as developed Homer, Plato and Aristotle in antiquity, or Goethe in Germany, or Shakespeare in England—only in different spheres? Was he the greatest moral genius of the world?

Now, I submit to you that, while there is much for historical investigation in this matter, the real test as to the Saviour's nature and rightful claims cannot be established by

SUNDAY MORNING, March 28, 1875. LESSON: Isa. lxi. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 130, 255, 1267.

historical investigation. It is a question that must be determined by methods which he himself pointed out.

I have read this passage because in it you will find that love, or the mode of universal benefaction and good-will, is the key-note. "If ye love me [that is the entering and opening word], keep my commandments." In other words, the command is: Develop love into a practical form. Begin with the culture of the spirit of personal and universal beneficence and good will; and then develop it into every form of active life. Keep my commandments, whether they are the teaching of nature, whether they are so-called scientific commandments (or commandments revealed by science), whether they are social commandments, or whether they are commandments of the household. Whatever true command is laid upon you, develop obedience to it in the spirit of love, so that it shall be fulfilled in that spirit. The promise is that to one who does this shall be sent "the spirit of truth"—the universal knowing spirit—the insight or perception of truth —the reflection and ascertainment of truth—the very intuition by which truth is disclosed. The mind under such circumstances shall become a globe, luminous, casting rays out of its moral condition into every obscure corner or place, and giving light which comes back by reflection from the nature of the things on which it falls. "Love me," he says, "and develop love as the genius of the world-life; carry it into every element and every practical form of life, so that it shall become the absolute controlling power; and out of that condition there will spring up in you a universal capacity of knowing: not instantaneous, not miraculous, but real, with a larger expression. This order of development, this style of education for the human soul, brings all its nobler nature out, and gives it supremacy over the lower and animal nature; and that is the test that I am the Saviour of the world, the Son of God, and divine. You shall find it when you shall have developed in yourselves that which is in me, and which I declare to be the sum of the truth in reference to time and the universe. When I declare that the kingdom of God and its righteousness are the first to be sought, and that then all other things shall come in their train as sequences and proper

effects, the way to find out whether I am right or not, is to put yourself in such relations as I point out. If you do that, you shall know." If a chemist declares to you that such and such compounds produce such and such effects, it is quite in vain for you to stand and reason it out. He and everybody else would ridicule you if you did, and would say, "The way to tell whether it be true or not, is to perform the experiment. If it be true, it will come out so, and if it be not true, it will not come out so; and you will have some ground for dissenting."

If a person declares that with certain lenses, and certain combinations of them, certain things can be seen; if he declares that with a given instrument you can accomplish given results, it is in vain for you to fall back on old ideas, and say, "It is all nonsense." The way to ascertain whether what he says is true or not, is to put yourself in relation with these instruments, and see if the effects follow which it was declared would follow. Then you will know whether the things stated are true or false.

In view of this general statement, let us test the question whether Christ is divine, and is the Saviour of the world in his relations to the human soul.

In the first place, you will bear in mind that our Saviour never lays any stress on historical argument. It has been a matter of wonder to a great many—it was to me at one time, and probably it was to you—how it should be that the manifestation of God in the person of Jesus Christ should come as it did. Well, I never thought that Christ should have come with thunder and lightning; I never dreamed that there should have been an army, with banners and music, and all that—that would be childish; but I have wondered that he should have come in such an obscure nation, and in the obscurest province of it, and among the obscurest people, his mission being developed through the laboring classes. However, that is all well enough; but it has seemed to me strange that he should have gone about preaching without a secretary, without a reporter; with no possible provision made for the transmission of his messages which had in them the life of the soul, and the genius of the time to come. There was

no scribe to take down our Saviour's utterances; and when he died, so far as we have evidence, he himself never had written a word, except that which he wrote on the ground. He never had made provision for a record. His maxims, his parables, his doctrines, his exhortations, his sweet love-tokens, all of them were held in solution in the memory. No steps were taken for their preservation.

In other words, Christ seemed almost as if he floated in time without a body, and without any of those appliances and instrumentalities which we, in the body, use, and use to such a good purpose. He seemed to have been a spirit, as it were, moving in atmospheric conditions, and teaching men almost without any organic physical nature.

Christ never alluded to his own work. He never, in any way, used his personal history: not that it would have been objectionable; but he did not. He never said, "I am a Jew," so as to ingratiate himself with his own people. Knowing that they hated a foreigner, he never said to them, "I have from my youth been educated strictly in the synagogue, and in the observance of all rites and services." Although it was a fact, and although it was a right thing, he never threw out that lure to orthodoxy, so that men might have confidence in him. He never said, "I, too, know what it is to be hard worked and to suffer hunger," that he might win the sympathy of the great laboring-class of the community that surrounded him. He did not make a show of his patriotism. He did not declare himself to be the workingman's friend. He made no allusion to his external and personal history, except simply to say: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head," or something like that. Beyond such incidental remarks, called forth for special purposes, there was no use made by him of his outward development in time during his ministry, so far as we know anything about it. On his power, on his miracles, he placed a very low valuation. A miracle is a sign and substitute; and we do not want miracles, because we have a great deal better evidence of things than any miracle could be. We have reason and experience in regard

to moral things, so that with us miracles are not necessary. But there may be easily conceived a condition of mind in which the thing proposed to men is so contrary to anything of which they have any knowledge that, for the time being, superstition, wonder, admiration, in regard to a sign of the thing proposed, is needful. The sign of a truth may be a substitute for a vision of that truth before the mind is able to perceive it; but the sign ceases to be of value when the mind can perceive the truth itself. So, our Saviour always spoke of his miracles depreciatingly. He ranked them far lower than he did his own discourses. You will recollect that when a nobleman came to him for the healing of his son, he said to him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

He makes a distinction between that kind of belief which comes from seeing a sign or a miracle, and that kind of belief which comes from him personally. He says, "You will not believe unless you see me, like some thaumaturgist, work a miracle." What he wanted, was that they should believe in *Him*. When a miracle would help them to do that, as a secondary instrument, he employed it; but his power to work miracles; his power on the sea and on the land; his power with wood, and stone, and fire, and water, was as nothing to him. The thing which he had continually in his thought was, what he was of himself, and what he would have men become by accepting his ideal of life and character. "Believe in me," he said: "I am the true life of the soul." He put faith in himself highest and first. It was in him that men were to trust, by love and sympathy. That is, their faith in him was to be a faith that worked, as Paul said, by love. They were to trust him because there was that in him which made him "chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." It was the beauty that was in him; it was the true simplicity and perfection of his nature; it was the congruity of all the elements of his character; it was his absolute harmony with his circumstances on every side; without imperial might, without any schools of philosophy round about him, without the ordinary instruments which give publicity to men's acts, without literary fame, without

pretensions of any sort to that which belonged to his race-stock, or the history of the age in which he lived, but with a voice and life almost disembodied while in the flesh, floating through the period of time,—it was these things that constituted the reasons why they should trust in him. Account to me, if you can, for the fact that this almost disembodied influence has turned the world up-side down, has penetrated all philosophies, has pierced all legislatures, and has been at the root of law, of education, or morals, and of belief, the world over, ever since. How absolutely inadequate were any of the external circumstances which attended the career of Christ on earth! and yet, what a power there was in him! and what a power has come down from him by virtue of that essential self-ness which was in him—his interior and real nature.

Now, they who perceive this in any degree, and come into a love-sympathy with it, have taken the first step in the direction of faith. It was in the matter of faith that he differed from all others. It was that which gave him his personality—namely, his spiritual nature.

No man can test Christ except by conforming to his ideal. No man can test Christ without making the test in himself as to whether he has that which made the ideal Christ what he has been to the world—as to whether the structure, operation, drift, tendency of his interior nature, is working out in him what Christ said it should work out, and what he promised that it should work out, as the underlying drift of creation.

Did Christ, then, bring all virtues into the world? No, not morality. He did not invent that. There was justice before he was just; there was love before he was loving; there was mercy before he was merciful; there was order in the household before he came upon earth; there was obedience to parental authority prior to his advent. Neither did he invent religion; but he brought into the world a conception of that which was in him, and of those elements which had the infallible development of men out of their animal conditions into the highest spiritual or divine conditions. That he did; and it was not done before nor since, as he did

it. Hence the true test as to whether he was Christ, or in any sense divine, must be found in verifying the declarations which he made.

For example, in relation to the individual, take some test points—for instance, as to whether the development of love will give growth to every other part of man's nature. Will love educate and develop the reason? Looking at it in a very narrow way, no. Looking at it in a larger way, it certainly will, and does; it always has done so, and will do so again. What are the things that hinder or prevent the education and development of the reason? Are they not prejudice, pride, selfishness, self-indulgence, animalism? It is said that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and that they can not be reconciled. No; on any ground of equality, they can not. The fleshly, animal nature that man has, rises up, and is perpetually in the way of the right activity of the human reason; and any moral change by which you reduce to subordination the appetites and passions—pride, envy, self-indulgence, and the like—leaves the reason unenslaved to the extent to which that subordination is carried. In proportion as you repress these underlying instincts, the reason rises and develops itself.

After the winter was past, in old New England, where we had chopped our wood there were vast beds of chips; and under the chips were all manner of roots that wanted to grow; and when the blue-bird had blown his flute, and the robin had warbled her song, and the sun had shot forth its mild rays, and the grass had started under the south edges of the sheltering fence, and every thing in the vegetable world had begun to come forth, under these chips nothing grew. And when, later, the breaths of the browsing cows smelled of the grass, as they came home from the pasture, nothing grew under these chips. And when, still later, the crawling plants lifted themselves up from beneath the soil, nothing grew where these chips were. But, by and by, when there was a general clearing up, we took our rakes and scraped up the chips, and gathered them in heaps, and tumbled them into the wood-house; and straightway there were yellow blades of grass to be seen, which had been trying to grow, but could

not; and, in less than a week, these blades of grass had straightened themselves up, the whole spot was changed from yellow to green, and blossoms were getting ready to come forth.

Now, at first, the reason could not grow because it was underneath superincumbent hindrances; and it was the taking off of these hindrances, and exposing it to the sun, that gave it growth. The human reason has been overslaughed, weighed down, by animal propensities. It has been kept busy as the servant of the appetites—cruelty, combativeness, and all manner of selfish inclinations. It has been running here and there on errands for the lower passions. It was only by the removing of the control of these passions, that the reason could be set free, and rendered susceptible to those influences whose tendency it is to produce such conditions as will insure intellectual growth. He who trusts in the love of Jesus Christ as the invisible element by which the lower instincts are held in subordination; he who lifts himself up and takes hold of the spirit of God as it is manifested in Jesus Christ,—he has the disinfectant which will give health to his soul, when it has been defiled by the lower animal appetites and passions. Historically considered, whatever element has tended to repress these appetites and passions, and to bring in sweet affections, and develop the higher moral sentiments, has also tended to develop the reason.

Why is it that there is such intelligence in America, in England, in Scotland, in old Switzerland, or in any Christian nation where the great masses are intelligent, except it be that there is in these countries a Christianity which teaches men to deny themselves? It is because they have been taught to deny will, and pride, and selfishness; it is because they have been taught, holding themselves obedient to law, to deny drunkenness, and theft, and slandering, and all manner of evil concupiscence, and whatever hinders self-government.

Now, invariably, wherever self-government is taught, there follows it, in the course of time, common sense, intelligence, an appetite for knowledge, and growing reason, and the spirit of truth, which Christ promised should come to

those who loved him and kept his commandments. This promise we know is in part fulfilled, and is certainly illustrated by the fact that Christianity works out, in the long run, and in great masses of men, high and universal intellectual conditions.

Faith does not, in each individual instance, immediately, as the instantaneous fruit of conversion, work out the element of reason; but taking it comprehensively, and regarding it in its relations to time and to the race, the condition prescribed by Christ of adhesion to him does work out universal intelligence.

Apply it to the moral sense. There certainly was a moral sense before Christ came into the world; but moral sense was always developed first centripetally—so much so that moral philosophers, and many theologians of good repute, believe that the sense of right and wrong in us is developed by our consciousness of that which is right and wrong as applied to ourselves. They think that man first learned that it was wrong to strike others because he felt how wrong it was for them to strike him. Historically considered, it is very likely true that the early training of men and a knowledge of right and wrong stood connected with the defense of their own low animal rights and conditions; but there is a higher sense of right and wrong than that. The feeling of right and wrong is selfish in its origin, necessarily; but, if we are rightly educated, we come to a sense of right and wrong as relates to the races; and there is such a thing as coming to a state of development in which a man does not feel the wrong that is done to him very much. Christ did not feel the wrong which was heaped upon himself; but there could not be the cry of a child, or the wail of a woman, or the suffering of a culprit, or anything that needed pity, that did not instantly awaken the greatness of his soul, and call forth his compassion.

Now, that idea of justice which all governments have, and which is popular, is yet crude and rudimentary; and it is touched with the fatal element of combativeness and destructiveness. The universal notion of justice, which is that of inflicting pain for wrong done, or making a creature un-

happy because he has made others unhappy, indicates the lowest form of moral development; and there never will be a justice fit for universal use in securing the highest condition of mankind until there is a justice which springs out of love, and not out of a sense of right and wrong. Hating evil never made a purer or a better intelligence. It is loving good that makes men like God—not hating evil. We are to hate evil; we are to abhor it; but hatred or abhorrence of evil cannot be the fountain out of which we derive our highest manhood. That cannot be the root of the great moral element which is so sensitive to right and wrong. This is an element which must come from a much higher development. You never will have humane nations as long as nations may do things such that, if an individual should do them, everybody would call him a devil. If one man with his teeth devours his neighbor, is it any less hideous when a million teeth are doing it instead of a single set?

It is said that nations must do these things for self-preservation. Oh, well, when you plead the baby act, it is so. Nations that are weak, and cannot do the best things, may do things that are less than the best; and when they are confessedly weak, we are not to inveigh against them as though they were capable of acting in accordance with the instincts of higher human nature. On that ground we are to be lenient in our judgment of them; but on any ground that ought to develop the race into anything like millennial conditions, there never can be a moral sense which is not developed out of love.

The true mother, the woman that feels that her child is from her loins, and remembers that it is bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh, mind of her mind, and soul of her soul, and loves it better than herself, and, because she loves it, hates to see it turn toward animalism, and by love draws it back therefrom—she exemplifies the justice of the universe—divine justice. Hidden, many of these things were, from the wise, and revealed to babes—yes, and revealed to the mothers of babes. There is more theology in woman's love for the child that she has tried to save from evil than there is in all the writings of Bellamy, or in all the tomes of Chrysostom. We

got our idea of justice from the Romans, mostly; and they were as hard as iron. Those old organizers thought the State was more important than the people that composed it; they enforced their notions of government by machinery; and those who were in its way had to be crushed, as, in India, persons are crushed under the car of Juggernaut. The great machine of government and law is dragged along, and whoever gets under its ponderous wheels is ground to powder; and blood like wine flows from the victims that are crushed beneath them. No matter who is sacrificed, law and government are considered as the most important things. But I say that souls, sentient, living creatures, are the transcendent elements in time, and that there never can be a right universal moral sense until you have one that executes itself on the principle of true love.

I believe in justice, but not in such justice. I believe in angelic justice, but not in leonine justice. I believe in the justice of the heart, but not in the justice of the body—in the justice of the soul, but not in the justice of the teeth. Till we can get something better we must tolerate what we have. If you were to take away the crude, rudimentary forms of justice which exist among us, the world would be worse off than it is. We must have something; but do not think that our justice is the ideal justice. It may be indispensable for the present time; but do not suppose that it is justice of the highest order. Nay, never, until the moral sense takes a higher pitch, and is chorded and tuned to the Soul that loves good, and is God because it has good universal for its end—never until then will there be a moral sense of the highest and noblest stature.

So, too, the æsthetic sense is developed. He who stands in the Lord Jesus Christ by love; he who believes in him by love-sympathy, and so enters into his life, and into the conception of the life which develops through him and by him —he it is that will find the sense of the beautiful developed in himself.

It has been said that, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, was the artistic element developed. It was not developed there in the way in which it first appeared in

Greece, and subsequently was imitated in Rome, and grotesquely showed itself in mediæval Europe, and now exists in the various schools of art in modern times. There was not in the Old Testament, nor could there be under the *régime* of Moses, the making of statues and of pictures. So strong was monotheism, and so strong was the idea of the universality of God in the monotheistic system, that men were forbidden to make any image. The education in that direction was so strong that it did not develop the art instinct—not even in their structures. Architecture was brought among the Jews from without. The Phœnicians were the first architects of Jewish buildings, afterwards the Greeks, and then the Romans. The Jews had not been architects, and physical art had not been developed by that race-stock. What did they develop? They developed the beauty of holiness. The sense of the beautiful in the highest forms of character never had such illustration as in the teachings of the prophets and the apostles. The Jew-stock gave the seed-forms of beauty—for I aver that the art instinct is dependent on the higher forms of moral beauty: not that art begins low, and then may possibly work itself up to a higher form, but that the true source out of which art flows is the higher moral conditions of men. In other words, that which dematerializes man, that which takes away the flesh, or the grossness of it, tends to develop a sense of the ideal and beautiful. It is the very mother of art; and therefore, in the long run, a sense of the beautiful is developed by Christianity.

You will say to me, at once, "Now, nowhere on the globe is Christianity more universal and operative than in America; and yet, America never has been an artistic nation. Not only so, but that part of America which is the hot-bed of Christianity—puritanical New England—has had no art." That is true in one sense; but there is more truth under that. There is not a nation on the globe where, though art is so delinquent, a sense of the beautiful is so universal. It does not require that a man should be able to paint a picture, in order to represent beauty. A woman who knows how to arrange the ornaments and furnishings of her parlor

in such a way that they shall be pleasing, is an artist: not in the sense in which we generally use that term; but in the sense of appreciating beauty, and the power to surround herself with things beautiful. A man is an artist who can represent landscapes and figures on canvas; and the wagoner is an artist also, in his way, who, on Washington's Birthday, puts ribbons on his horses, and polishes the brass on his harness, and, when every thing is made clean and bright, says, "Don't they look fine?" His is not art, in the sense of making pictures, or domes like those of Michael Angelo; but it has the element of the love of beauty in it.

Now, I say that this nation, which has had morality and Christianity more universally diffused among the whole masses of its population, from the bottom to the top, than any other nation, has a sense of what is beautiful in equipage, in raiment, in the arrangement of the house, in all domestic matters, to a greater extent than any other nation. I say that Christianity has developed the æsthetic tendency in man: not professional art; not art as a business, which is aristocratic; but art as a democratic element.

Religion has not developed among us as an aristocratic power or influence. Hierarchy has not flourished in our midst in the past, whatever it may do in the future. What has flourished? The democratic form of religion—not the aristocratic.

So is it with knowledge. Philosophy has had a hard time of it, and always will have, until it courts the common people. Find a man who scorns the rabble, and thinks of himself, and studies and writes only for his own improvement and aggrandizement, and he generally has himself to read what he writes; and as that does not pay, he starves. But let him admit the gracious beneficence of the democratic principle, and let him say, "He that knows belongs to him that does not know; he that is accurate belongs to him that is inaccurate; he that is fine belongs to him that is rude"; let him become the benefactor of his inferiors, without arrogance,—and we say to him, "Go on and study: only let your light shine, and we will see that there is oil in your lamp all the time." In this country, those men flourish who study,

and are willing to distribute what they learn. Everything in our country takes on the democratic form—everything in scholarship, in science, in religion, and in art. In the special forms of painting, sculpture and architecture, we have been deficient until lately; but the development of art as a domestic, personal element, is more general in our land than in any other; and it springs from the sense of holiness, or, in other words, from the upper-mind education—from that education which takes in reason and all the moral sentiments.

This faith in Christ which enters into the central teaching of the Saviour—namely, the love-principle which brings to men communion with him, and which, it is promised, will bring the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, to abide with them—this also tends to the reduction, by the regulation and subordination of the lower elements of life, of all those causes which lead to care, and sin, and sorrow and remorse.

I have been speaking of the influence of that faith which works by love, and which brings us into communion with God through Jesus Christ, in developing the reason, the moral sense, and the æsthetic sense; and now I say that he who, in the practical applications of life, has this personal sympathy with Christ, and attempts to fashion his mind and regulate his life according to the divine prescription, tends more than any other man to free himself from those causes of disturbance and friction and suffering by reason of which the world groans and travails in pain until now. More than half your troubles spring from unnecessary pride unnecessary self-ness, and unnecessary ambition.

You have had gloomy weeks and months, and your house has been distasteful to you, and the very voice of your companion has been to you like music to one who has the earache, harsh and hard. What is the matter? Why, you had worked twenty years, and you were worth eight or nine hundred thousand dollars, and down came Mr. Chase into the street, and, contrary to what he said the day before, ordered the sale of gold, and your stocks went tumbling to the ground, and were swept away; and now you have only about fifty thousand dollars. You fought against it, and rushed about

the street like a mad bull, and were in great distress, and could not sleep. What was the matter? You had only fifty thousand dollars left! What is the cause of your distress? Wounded ambition; excessive worldliness. You have enough to eat, enough to drink, enough to clothe yourself with, enough to educate your children with, enough for your absolute and higher wants. If you are patient and content you have all that you need; and if you had to divide that fifty thousand dollars, and take up with half of it, you would be able to get along very well. I think a million men in this nation would be willing to compromise to-day for twenty-five thousand dollars. But out of your loss come jealousy, distress, and sleepless nights. And, when you go into the sanctuary and pray that God would deliver you from care, what you want is to have God deliver you from care by giving you back your eight hundred thousand dollars! But cannot you get deliverance from care in any other way?

Here is this complication of circumstances. You should learn how to step out of those circumstances. Suppose this man does hinder you, suppose that man does hate you, suppose this man does pursue you—just you step here, and leave them to think that you are there. There is not one of them that can touch you. YOU? Does your pocket represent YOU? Does that floating thing called "reputation" represent YOU? Is there no more *you-ness* in you than what is on the outside? The YOU is your SOUL. It is that part of you which has power to trust, to hope, to have faith, and to love. It is the triumph of manhood in you. It is that which makes you feel that all things are yours—that not only time and the world are yours, but that eternity and God are yours. And what are you, that, because mosquitoes bite you, cry, and wonder that men can be pelted with troubles and not cry?

Half your cares, four-fifths of them, ninety-nine parts in a hundred of them, according to the Sermon on the Mount, are from this: that you are seeking the world, and are not seeking the kingdom of God and its righteousness. Says Paul, "Righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost" are the kingdom of God; and Christ says, Seek these higher

moral ends, and they will deliver you from the fear of lack of raiment, from fear of the want of bread, from fear of cold or heat, from any fear. Neither winter, nor summer, nor hunger, nor neglect, nor threatening, nor want, nor abuse of any kind, can touch those who believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have power and dominion over the world when you have faith in the Heart of all that is good.

Not only does faith in Christ bring men up from sin, and from living in their lower nature, but it develops in them a stimulus, a courage, a fortitude that makes the world one perpetual triumph. Your faith is your sense of Christ who has called you. It is your sense of life in the higher realm. Says Paul, "My life is hid with Christ in God." There is where I put it. There is where I invest it.

I receive a million dollars in United States bonds. There is a fellow that sees me take them, and he winks at another fellow. I carry the bonds home in a bundle, and get there just before dinner. The man walks along and sees me go into the house with them. Just at twilight, when he is not watching, I slip out and go to the Brooklyn Safe-Deposit Company and put them in there. Nobody sees me. I go back home, and go to bed and to sleep, locking all the doors of my room; and, in the night, I hear some burglars in the house. I know what they are after. I hear them racketing and fumbling downstairs after those bonds; but I lie in bed and laugh. Down in the kitchen, through the dining-room, up in the study, all around, everywhere, they go, after those bonds. "When they get them, I guess they will enjoy them," I say.

Well, now, in the world, when a man has hid his chief treasure in Jesus Christ and in God, and the devil comes racketing around after it, hunting and trying him here and there, he can laugh and say, "Devil, when you get me, you will have to go where God is. That is where I live. There is my home." And the devil will not go there: he will let you alone first.

The way is simple enough. There is no secret and no mystery in it. Rise to that idea which was made known to you in Jesus Christ. What is it to be a man, what is it to

love God, what is it put yourself in sympathy with the divine disclosure, but to lift yourself above care into all strength, and all beauty, and all rest, and all hope, and all certainty?

All these things are fit themes for to-day,* when the whole Christian world is variously occupied in ringing bells, in the sounding of trumpets or organs, in the singing of songs, and in the display of flowers, as though all things were blossoming into summer,—celebrating the resurrection of Christ by the body. When will the day come on which will be celebrated the resurrection of the Spirit of Christ; of the love of God in Jesus Christ; of that love which is the truest interpretation of justice; of that love which is the supreme motive power of the individual, of the family, of the neighborhood, of the state, of the race, and of the universe? Then, when all tongues and nations and peoples shall rise up in that new-fashioned life—then, when, drawing their inspiration directly from the creative fountain of love in God, they shall present, in their several degrees and relations, the same essential and divine instincts and feelings—then the new heavens and the new earth will have come, and God will rule without an adversary, and all the world will join in that jubilant song which will expel from the universe all groaning and travailing in pain, all misereres and requiems that have filled the ages; and animalism shall be dead, and the spirit shall be alive, and the whole realm shall rejoice together.

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* Easter Sunday.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We, too, are thine, our Father!—the little ones—the ungrown children—the babes of thy household. With thee are those who have come to discretion. With thee are those who have, through sorrow and through joy, through hope and through fear, educated and developed into the estate of sons of God; and they are pleasing in thy sight; and thou art their joy and their life. What they do, what is the glorious occupation in the spirit life, we know not. We, though, are of them, and are following after, with various step, in sorrow and in joy. The ministration of thy Spirit is to every one to profit withal; and to each, as thou seest that he needs. We do not march in common ranks with a common step; but thou art drawing every one of us. Thou knowest each one by name and by nature. Thou knowest all the influences which move upon our personal dispositions. Thou knowest who are afflicted by reason of dullness, so that they cannot feel; and who, by reason of acute feeling, are in over-pain perpetually. Thou knowest who look through the dominance of ignorance as they that look through clouds, and who behold the sun, and are unsheltered and exposed to its piercing beams. Thou knowest all the ways of temptation through which men walk, and in which they cut the foot, or tire the hand, or are poisoned, or suffer in any wise. Thou knowest who are walking with heavy burdens, and who go light as with wings. All our life is known to thee; but thy life is not known to us, in our worldly state. Thou dost not make thyself appear to our lower life; yet thou dost to our higher life. We do not recognize thy form, nor thy ways of working; but we do discern thy power, and the blessed fruit thereof; and we rejoice that though thou art surrounded by those who are exalted to a higher stature and to more blessed attainments than we have reached, thy heart is also with us who are so far away from thee. Thou art thinking of the cradle; and thou dost behold thy little ones, even though they be soiled and defiled. And though they know not how to behave, or behave contrary to their knowledge, they are thine, and thou art drawing them; and it is the greatness of thy knowledge—a knowledge moving in the great realm of pity and compassion, and pouring forth bounties from the eternity of thy love—that makes thee God of our thought. Thou art employing thy hand, and the universe doth show forth thy handiwork. The mountains are thine, and the sea is thine, and the sky, and the sun, and the moon and every star; but it is thine HEART that hath made us, and is moulding us, and preparing us to be a generation of holy priests unto God.

We beseech thee that thou wilt make us to feel less and less of that confidence which springs from any sense of our own morality, our own virtue, or our own holiness. Grant that we may feel that our whole life is accomplished in God. As all things which the sun looks upon, it is creating by its light and by its warmth, so that they shall glory, not that they made themselves, but that they are glorified in the light that brought them forth; so may we look upon ourselves as plants of righteousness growing in the garden of the Lord,

and drawn forth by the Divine Spirit with wonderful influence—by that heavenly nature which goes every whither, formless and unrecognizable except by that fruit of righteousness which springs from its coming and its working.

Grant, we beseech thee, that we may feel as if our whole life were hid with Christ in God; and more and more may we learn to long for the full disclosure of that eternal Friend who will be more bountiful when we behold him than it ever entered into the heart of man to conceive; who will be more gracious than any human thought of graciousness; who will be sweeter and finer than any conception that we have of sweetness and refinement; who will be more loving than we ever dreamed that any being could be, and out of whose love will spring greater joy than ever came from the love of father, or mother, or lover, or friend, on earth.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may strive to see God by the way of holiness, cleansing ourselves from corruption, from self-indulgence, from selfishness, from pride, from envy and malice, and from every malign and hurtful evil. Grant that we may grow into the wisdom of that mightiest of all power, creating love, that we may walk in the spirit of Christ, and so know that he is the very Christ, and that he is the manifestation of God, and have thus in our experience a sense of growing richer and more blessed by our unity and affiliation with the general assembly and church of the first-born.

How glad we are that they are in heaven who on earth did quarrel and wrangle about the truth—mighty men, accomplishing thy work, and yet blinded and imperfect, and hurling against each other anathemas. They are now reconciled in an eternal joy of love. They behold each other, who did not know each other upon earth; and they who bore with cruel blows upon their victim here, are with their victim there, forgiven and blessed. We do not know each other. That which we call by name is not that which is. How few of us see the soul-life of those who are round about us! How few of us know what we do! Thou that didst pray upon the cross, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do, grant that that same spirit which was in thee may be in us, and may grow, and that we may bear about with us perpetually a sense of how little we know of the kingdom within, and how they whom we fancy we know are not in our knowledge what they are in the sight of God. So may we learn to forgive; so may we learn to judge charitably; so may we learn to be patient one with another; so may we learn to deal with each other in that large spirit of Christ's charity, Christ's faithfulness, and Christ's love, that we may realize in our own sphere what is the divinity of love, and what is its power among men.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon every one in thy presence; to each severally as he needs; to all the households of this church who have come forth this morning. We pray that thou wilt bless the families that are accustomed to worship here. Bless the little ones; the youth; those that are coming into the responsibilities of life; those that are bearing the burden and heat of the day; and those that are beginning to feel the infirmities of age, and to see signs of their relief in the taking down of their

earthly tabernacle. Bless all who are with us to-day, and give them a sense of home-brotherhood and of nearness to the heavenly realm, and to the company of those who wait for them in heaven. We pray for all who are separated from us; for all our absent ones; for all that are upon the sea or in foreign lands; for all that are distributed abroad upon this continent; for all that are in peril; for all that are under temptation.

Strengthen those who preach the Gospel to-day. Fill all thy churches with rejoicing. Grant that all the recollections and associations and glorious truths which shall this day be flamed forth by thy servants may be accompanied by the blessing of the divine Spirit from on high, and with love for the church universal. We pray for those that are in error, but that nevertheless are seeking the truth. Oh, that thou wouldst spread abroad everywhere among thy churches that spirit of humanity, and gentleness, and patience, and forbearance one with another which is of Christ! We pray that thus the world may more and more see what is Christ in the Christ-likeness of those who are redeemed by him.

Hasten the day when light and knowledge shall make the nations free and strong; when there shall be a brotherhood of nations as of individuals, and when war shall die away and be remembered only as a dream is remembered when one wakes in the morning; and when sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and the era of joy shall come and shall abide forever.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou accept our endeavor to follow thee with our thoughts. But we are so small. We are as very little children following a man; and many times we step to one footstep of him that guides us; nor do we understand whither he goeth, or what he is. We only follow, with a sense of security in him. So we take thee by the hand and follow thee, but with unequal steps, and endeavor to look into the things which belong to thy kingdom, and to thee, and to ourselves; and we see something—like men as trees walking. As things are discerned on hazy mornings in the summer, far off and illusive, and yet winning to the imagination, so we look upon the coming glory of the race in thy kingdom, when this shell of the body, this outer covering, shall be taken away, and we shall come into possession of the only thing that is real to us. Lord God, for the promise we thank thee; it is a property itself; but the fulfillment thereof eye hath not seen nor ear heard. It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what things are laid up for them that love thee. Grant that we may find them out by and by, each one of us, in the heavenly glory.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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